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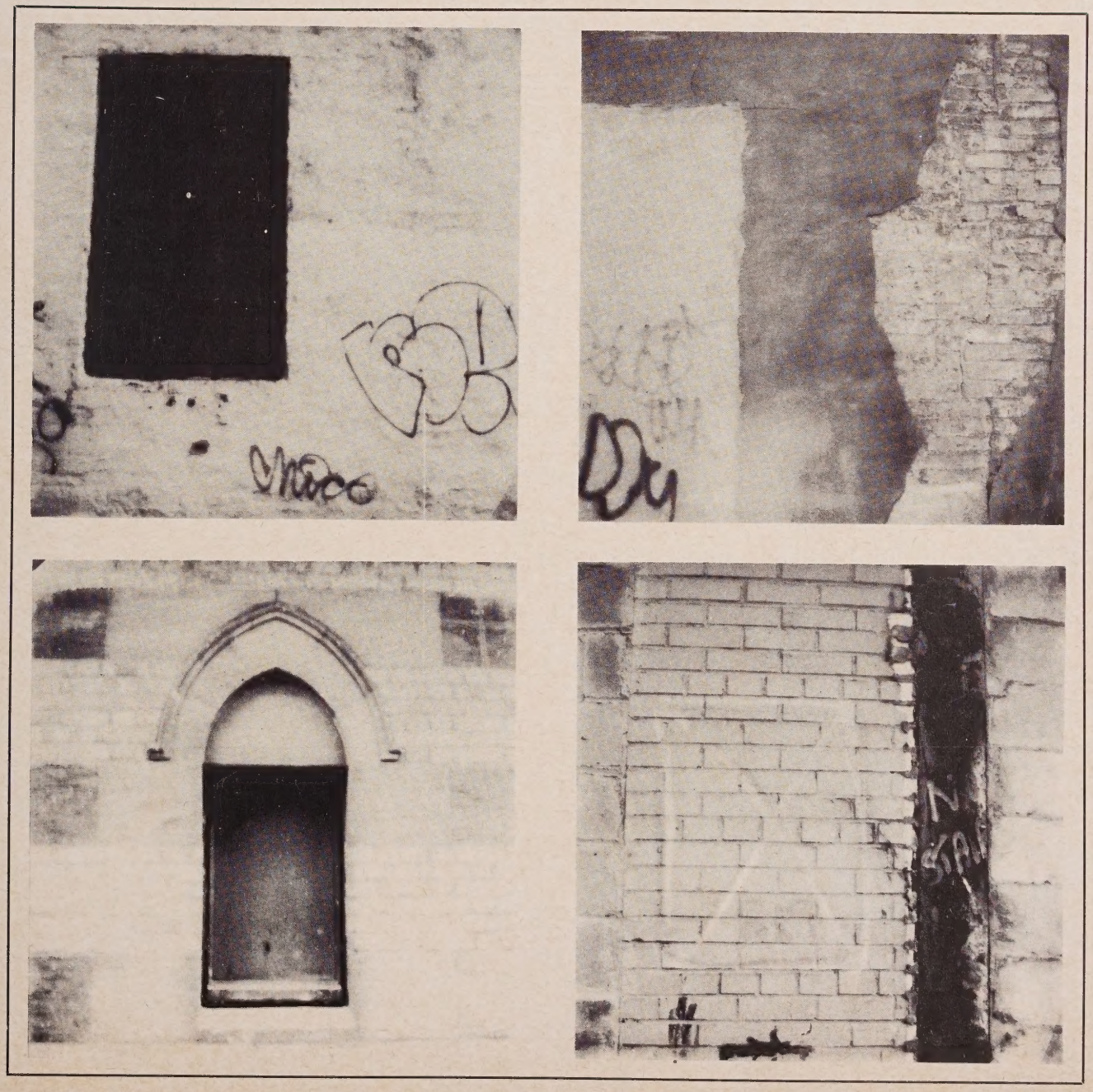
POETRY

THE ASIANADIAN

AN ASIAN CANADIAN MAGAZINE



Were You There?

WERE YOU THERE WITH THE ASIANADIAN?

YEARS AGO,
summer 1978, long before the current boat people drama, **ASIANADIAN** was there with an incisive report on the Vietnamese in Canada.

YEARS FROM NOW,
people will be talking about the two sensitive articles they read in **ASIANADIAN'S** Summer 1979 Issue on Sexuality —— about being gay and Asian in Canada, and about inter-racial relationships among Sansei Japanese Canadians.

WERE YOU THERE WITH THE ASIANADIAN?

Were you there when we sat face-to-face with such Asian Canadian personalities as painter Shizuye Takashima, poet Joy Kogawa, or human rights advocate Jag Bahdauria?

Were you there when we handed out our quarterly dubious award to the TORONTO STAR, Gordon Sinclair, or the CALGARY HERALD.

DON'T miss this opportunity —— subscribe to the **ASIANADIAN** and be here and now with us, keep current on the latest Asian Canadian affairs and issues, know what your fellow Asians are talking about these days, be here, and tell your friends you read it first in the **ASIANADIAN.**

THE ASIANADIAN, published quarterly by the Asianadian Resource Workshop, P.O. Box 1256, Station Q, Toronto, Ontario M4T 2P4.

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Editorial this issue: Lakshmi Gill (Poetry), A. Rahim, Momoye Sugiman, and Nancy Tong.

Production this issue: Diane Yip, Kathy Lai, Josephine Cheung, W.L. Cheung, Richard Lim, and Olivia Chow.

Cover Photos by Josephine Cheung.

The magazine welcomes submissions of critical essays, community news, articles, poetry, art work, short stories, and reviews concerning the Asian experience in Canada, as well as letters to the Editors. Manuscripts will only be returned if accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. The opinions expressed in this issue are not necessarily those of the editorial collective.

Editorial

This is an odd issue. For the first time in *Asianadian* history, this issue does not have a thematic format. The reasons behind such a move are that the thematic format is too academic, appeals only to a restricted audience, and makes the issue generally dull as it is too specialized. Such change was the result of a series of intensive discussion within *Asianadian*, and we presume that is what our readers like. So, if you think that we are changing for the worse, please write to us.

One may also note that this issue has an anthology of poetry edited by Lakshmi Gill. It is a collection of poems written by Asians in Canada and Asian Canadians. Gill has given a lot of thought in selecting these poems for they illustrate the multi-dimensional perspectives of Asians. As the readers may well testify, it is not common to find Asian poems in the mainstream literature; and Gill does a great service for us by editing an anthology, as she said, "we must give our children a literary heritage and an affirmative image."

Obata's article entitled "On Behalf of Japanese Canadians" provides a rare insight on the situation of Japanese Canadians during the last world war. The author hopes to "show how insidious, cruel, and unfair racial discrimination can be." As a Japanese veteran, Obata described the forcibly eviction of Japanese Canadians from British Columbia and the denial of their entry in the Canadian armed service during the war. Obata outlined the work of the Japanese Canadian Committee for Democracy in pushing the Canadian government to accept them in the army. Once accepted, their work was primarily restricted to intelligence efforts.

"The Rise and Fall of the Ku Klux Klan" written by M. Omatsu is a topical one. We hear, with great alarm, that the Ku Klu Klan is operating in Toronto, Vancouver, London, Halifax, and other towns and cities. The Klan's appearance in talk shows in the media, in schools, in taverns, in neighbourhoods, etc. has almost become a daily routine. We also see their "KKK" signs spray-painted on construction sites and young children are receiving recruitment cards and literature from the Klans. Omatsu examined the historical backgrounds and development of the Ku Klux Klan in the United States and came to the conclusion that banning the Klan is futile for it merely forces racist groups to go underground. She suggested that harassment and surveillance by agents of the state apparatus may be more effective in subduing the influence of the Klan. Omatus's conclusion remains controversial, upon reading her article, the readers may like to send us their views on the "pros" and "cons" of such solution and/or suggest alternatives.

Here in this issue, Rahim is providing the audience with his critical insights on the ways of life in Toronto. In his article entitled "Day and Night in Toronto", Rahim criticized the materialistic orientation of the Torontonians and despite this problem, he loves Toronto. Why ? We are not going to tell you. You have to read it for yourself.

Miki has written a long book review on *Within the Barbed Wire Fence*. Through this review, the readers will, no doubt, understand the experiences of Japanese Canadians more. In this issue, we also carry a report on the police raid of gay baths on February 5 --- an incident which made many residents in Canada angry. The anonymous reporter asked a series of questions which remained to be answered and outlined the community responses on the raid.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all those people who contribute articles to *Asianadian* for publication. Send to us your ideas and inspirations, they are welcome any time. We *must* also thank our friends who helped us in making the *Asianadian* Winter Warm-Up Party on February 21 successful. The fact that many people volunteered their time and energy in selling tickets, preparing foods and drinks, decoration, providing music (Vikram, many thanx !), etc... really encouraged the *Asianadian* members. To be honest, after more than two years of producing this magazine, many of the old members are almost burned out. We are also reaching a bankruptcy point beyond which *Asianadian* will cease to exist. But the success of February 21 revitalizes us, and our *Asianadian* friends should have the credit.

Bayang Magiliw

AN ANTHOLOGY OF POETRY BY ASIANS IN CANADA AND ASIAN-CANADIANS

EDITED BY LAKSHMI GILL

INTRODUCTION

In January, 1980, I discovered that I could no longer read 'White' literature. I was ashamed and angry that I had spent my entire life immersed in Western philosophies and ideologies. Names of Asian, Asian-American, and Asian-Canadian writers were as difficult to remember as Chinese dynasties, but I could dutifully rattle off the Eng. Lit. authors. During the crucial student years, I brushed by the "exotic" name, like Lin Yutang who was quite acceptable in academic circles, but I seldom sought out young Asian voices. It was always the latest Ferlinghetti or Dylan Thomas. Now I try to read Western writing and choke, as in a heavy, fat-laden feast which strains the heart. The angst has turned into a long whine, the juices into a short drip.

I conceived this collection because I wanted to hold a physical body of work, written by Asians in Canada and Canadians of Asian origin, in one book, just as I have held British poetry in one hand. I simply wanted to see how many we were, like counting off a row of vigil lights. I wanted to put the match to each individual candle and see the common uncommon glow.

My second reason was my children who are half Asian and half Canadian. They were growing up faithfully ticking off their Birney, Scott, Livesay, and Cogswell, then faltering after Kogawa. So for my children and children similar to them I gathered these names together, like prayer beads in a string.

Criteria for selection did not stop at being an Asian. These poets have no exclusively "Asian" imagery. Rienzi Crusz, for example, uses words like "oiled Brahmin," "bangles," "mango," and "saffron," but so does Allen Ginsberg. I balked at the word "oriental" in the title of the first poem in this anthology. Surely, Crusz is aware that to militant Asian Canadians that word, like "negro" to Blacks, is a derogatory, white man's word. But to him it is politically innocent. Should I judge him for this choice? Perhaps he is not a racist. Each to his own.

Read Carol Matsui's "Honda." Can you tell that this poem was written by an Asian Canadian? The colours rose and sepia spread beyond boundaries. The situation presented may have happened to some people. Or did you think "Japanese" because of the honda?

If there are immigrant poems, such as Sherali Hussein's "The Immigrant" and Cyril Dabydeen's "Exiles," these are portraits. The clash of cultures is an experience of all races. Sean Gunn's "assimilation" is exceptional not because it is anti-white but because it is a clever satire on white consumerism. The point of view is an exhortation to fellow Asians to retain their identity against the onslaught of western images and language. Like the grinding and polishing of stones, one must emerge as jewels after the battle.

Nirmale Singh's philosophical style in "Powers To Be," and Ram K. Raju's poems are reminiscent of nineteenth century Indian philosopher poets, as though we were reading a translation into English of some musical, untranslatable Sanskrit words. This style seems to make them specifically Asian, steeped as it is in Asian attitude towards life. But life is full of interchanges. Borrowings. Dead Greek myths are resurrected in Trieste. Old Christian dogmas are re-interpreted.

So by their imagery alone you are not to know them. Stereotypes and caricatures have always been anathema. One used to identify Canadian poets by their flora and fauna, and further regional subdivisions by their naming of little towns and village idiots. We now have wider identification marks. Ultimately, poetry is language, not rhetoric.

In our long, daily discussions, my father used to say that a true poet transcends time and country. To be difficult and indulgent, I would argue that Asian poets were different because-because, and also that to be effective we must be visible, that we must give our children a literary heritage and an affirmative image. We are here, we are here *now, everywhere, then* will take care of itself. This anthology is a brick not for smashing out white windows but for building an Asian temple. After we have built it, we will have a blessing and invite everyone. Then we will have tea at each other's holy grounds and discuss poems which transcend time and country.

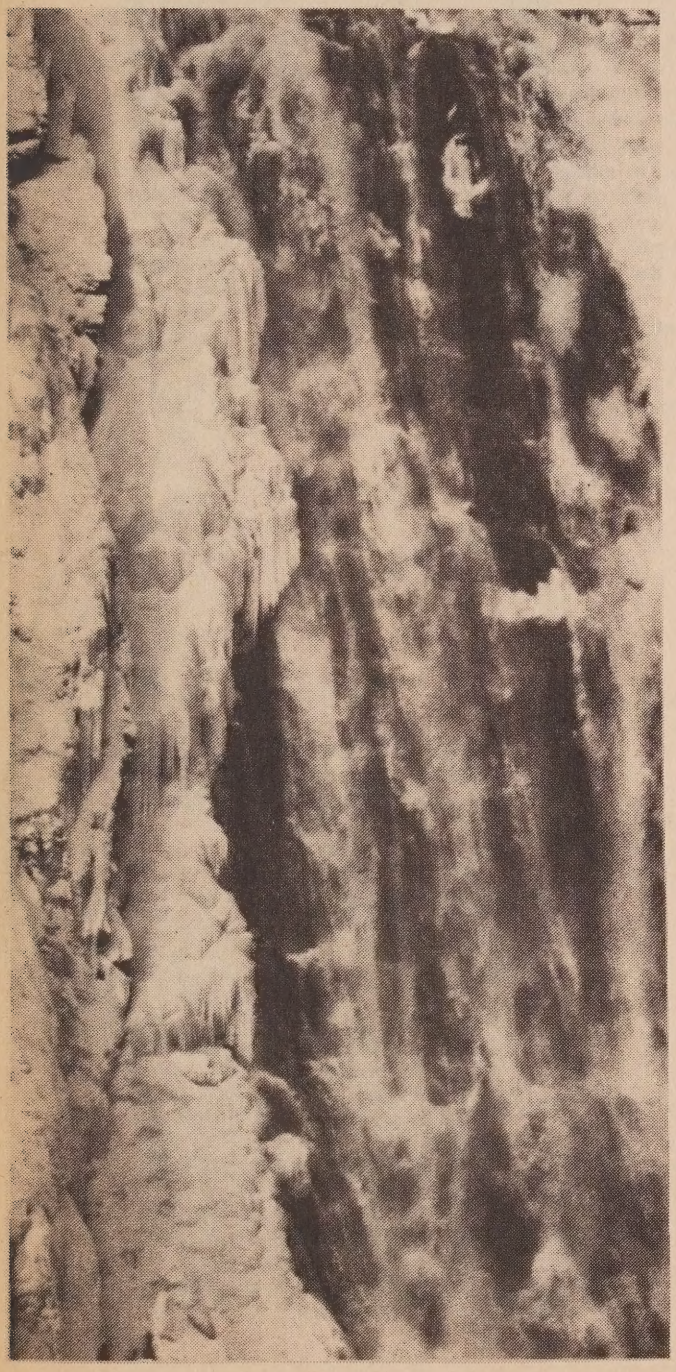
Vancouver, May 1980 Lakshmi Gill

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS :

"remains of an oriental poet writing in Canada" by Rienzi Crusz *first appeared in* Quarry (*Kingston, Ontario*).
"assimiliation" and "Orientation #1" by Sean Gunn *are from the anthology* Inalienable Rice (*Vancouver, B.C.*)

Title is from the first line of the Philippine National Anthem : Bayang magiliw (endeared land).

RIENZI CRUSZ



remains of an oriental poet
writing in Canada

About the butterfly
that flapped
amber
in the cerebral land

How winter
was made equal
to summer
and the skin glowed
like an oiled Brahmin
and bangles grew
on naked trees

And summer
blew orioles
salad of mango
and the Bird of Paradise
draped its wings
on the concrete land

They found
saffron wings
raw
on a smooth stone

The skull
separate still green
in the dark wound
of a tree

a thigh
bronze warm
with the maul
of thorns

And they found
the sun dead
under the snow

RIENZ CRUSZ

Born in Sri Lanka, came to Canada in 1965. Educated at the universities of Ceylon, London (England), Toronto, Waterloo. Presently, Senior Reference Librarian at the Universities of Waterloo, Flesh & Thorn (Pasdeloup Press), Elephant and Ice (Porcupine's Quill Press).

SUNITI NAMJOSHI

SUNITI NAMJOSHI

MELANGE RELIGIEUX

I shall sit
on a bean-bag, a small daisy
will sprout from my head. That
is the mute, the revised Flower Sermon.
Thus I teach THE RESURRECTION.

14

EMIGREE

"In my own country I was a princess." -- "yes,
but this is not your own country, miss."

Did you know, she said,
that the French kings
had Christian names?
The king of spades
is Louis. The king of clubs
is Gabriel. I knew them personally,
she said, and winced,
and laughed.

We are all princes in exile, she sang,
picking seashells, clamshells, crayfish and crabs.

The king's daughter is a white hart.
She runs through forests.
She never looks back.
The hunter who follows
or does not follow
(it is not certain)
sees quite clearly that she does not look back,
"Let it be known" -- her speech is lucid --
"that the royal children are mute and proud
and undiscovered."

SUNITI NAMJOSHI

Born in Bombay, India. Ph.D., McGill University. Presently an associate professor of English at Scarborough College, University of Toronto. Several books of poetry, latest is The Authentic Lie. *Member, League of Canadian Poets.*

RAM K. RAJH

Mother holding child
so beautiful, so warm
yet, it is this tenderness
that sows the seeds for
the tree of skulls, ever
widening.
time does kiss the womb
and dig the grave
Should we lament?
Should we grieve?
Should we just hold the
hands of death and life
creation and destruction
and whirl and dance
in maddening ecstasy.

Come wanderer, your
wandering is ended
and it has begun.
Hold our hads and we
will sing
"Life and Death, the golden ring!"

"How am I to play my part," the ancient voice cried
"in this musical tide?
When, alas! behind a veil
the conductor hides."

"Cry not! Cry not!" the youth sang
"Instead, give praise to the beggar's hand
to the ocean that arises and carves
the stone,
to the robin that falls, below the claws
of its friend, the eagle."
"Cry not! Cry not! It is not ours to
ask why only to wonder 'how beautiful'."

"How am I to play my part," the ancient voice cried
"in this musical tide?
When, alas! behind a veil
the conductor hides."

RAM K. RAJU

How Lament hides so convincingly behind Love.
How Desire hides deceptively behind Wish.
O...behind these myriad of images there
hides another.
How the labyrinth is inverted
and the wind knows no direction.

We have learned to sow
but not to destroy the weed
and we wonder...why does
our garden not grow?

I had a sense once,
and when I tried to
explain it...it drowned
in my words and became
non-sense.

RAM K. RAJH

25, born in Calcutta, brought to Canada at the age of 12. B.A. Dalhousie University, Philosophy and English. Interested in writing and art; has travelled extensively in the world. Lives in Halifax.

RIENZI CRUSZ

of life and death

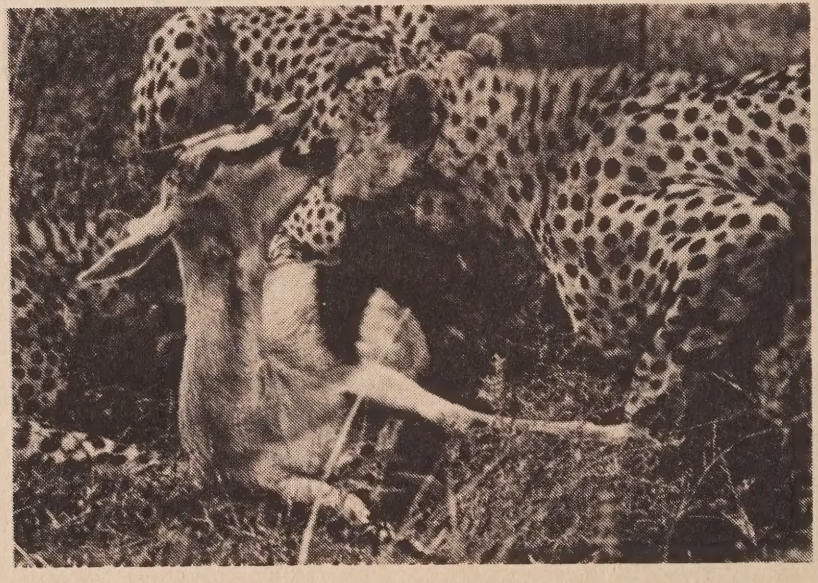
The waterhole is dead.

The wildebeest circle their agony,
this waiting
with the froth of the sun in their mouths,
for death or pilgrimage;
when one bull suddenly stiffens,
jerks the waterhole dream
and lunges
for the thunderous journey
across the Plains.

An audience of fawn
stands by the corridor of terror,
the last film of water
salting in their big gentle eyes---
when hooves brake,
one animal stops,
then turns on the axle
of its sweating hind legs,
and turns and turns and turns,
in the same place, same circle,
same anti-clockwise rhythm
of head and limbs,
only the changing angle of sun,
fading percussion of other hooves.

An audience in vertigo, the fawn
now unable to separate the life that fled
from the death that turns on itself--
flesh-fly in the wildebeest's brain,
the winder of a top,
tiny disjoiner of muscle from brain,
an instigator of direction
that goes nowhere but round,
and round and round,

until a turning
once too long for the heart,
arranges a swollen belly up
against the Serengetti sun.



STEPHEN GILL

Ode To Mosquitoes

It is often told
man ever adores
nature's charm-
graceful and calm.

A poet may paint
nature arrayed
in a diction prime
fixing a sweet rhyme.

In tunes and notes
symphonic and fine
a singer may find
devotion revealed
for nature sublime.

With brush and colours
and fingers esteemed
an artist may dream
the creation supreme

But none would reach
the passion and glee
mosquitoes exhibit
for flowers and trees.

These beings are born
in garden and fields
the valley and mounts
on grass and founts.

In open space
a park or a lake
these little souls
greet women and men
with a music droll.

The places snuggled
of ill-gotten wealth
where the great dwell
falsely feeling safe
where engines swarm
ugly explosive arms
to blight and blast
they easily cross.

To keep them alive
with a drop or two
attack on a ground
with alarming sound.

In many aspects
the mosquitoes excel
beasts and the men
they are happy as sea-waves
also honest and brave.

Glorious Dawn

My heart's beat
mumbles to me
adders of today
would pave the way
for a glorious dawn
when buds and thorns
and men and beasts
smile together
in life's field.

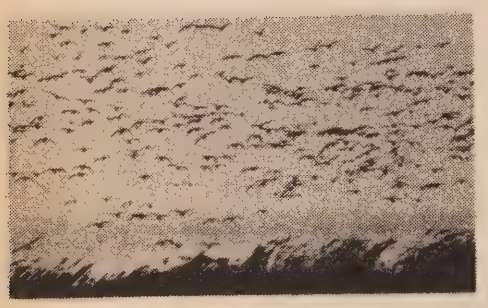
STEPHEN GILL

From India, educated at the Universities of Agra, Ottawa, and Oxford. Author of several books, edited Green Snow. *Publisher, Vesta (Cornwall, Ontario).*

CAROL MATSUI

Honda

You break my
smooth rose mood
of sunset
and solitude
with your distant lowing
like highway cattle
and tinge sepia
the voice that I leave
in a lover's open palm
as the sky rolls down



It was for winter
he made the coat.

He saw the bloodied hands
that cleaned the skin
push the shameless meat aside
He drew breath
and out of body
saw the hands were his.

It eased the guilt to know
that solitude had forced
the death
whose bones like pointing fingers
accused him
from the table.
He ignored the knife's grip
greased and red
pronouncing verdict with courtroom silence
about the cabin.

He ate the meat tastelessly
and when he was filled
dug a grave up hillside
retched
and retched.

Bundled
warm
he slept.

CAROL MATSUI

A 24 year old Sansei born in Toronto. She has just returned from a six month trip to Hawaii and Asia. Currently working and studying weaving in Toronto.

SYLVIA JONG

Even in Dreams

harrigan is magic.
we met in passing: he was riding the galaxy
and i was chasing the floodlights.

harrigan.
Magic.

Have you any illusions you'd like to sell?
In this lifetime we haven't a thing left to kill.

harrigan,
i believed so much
in magic.

You said you could turn this room into
a tunnel to the sky,
that i could even fly there
and back without bruising.

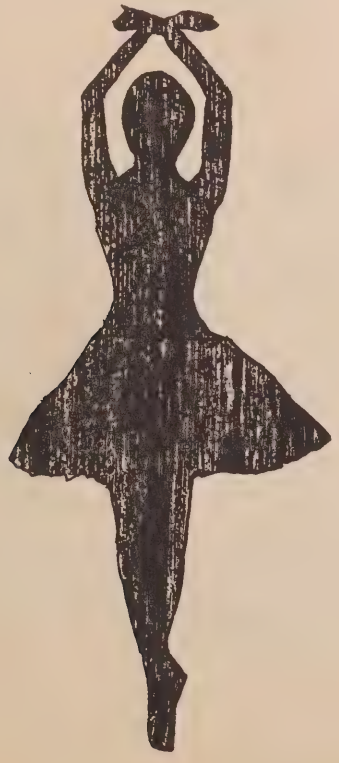
harrigan is magic.

On his last visit
he made me my favourite strawberry ice cream
when the ice cream man turned his back toward us.

i ate the ice cream too fast.
harrigan melted in the midst of my laughter.

Just give me one last chance harrigan.

Magic isn't easy,
not even in dreams.



Red Satin

Echoes of silence remain;
the studio is empty
save a lone figure
dancing to an imaginary
melody.

Lady of grace,
your body flows in
shades of red satin
turning and leaping
through turbulent circles
always ending at the same spot
going everywhere and nowhere.

Do you not know
that there is no glory
in fraudulent games
where no one knows the rules
and worse yet
nobody cares.

Lady, the movements are over;
your lover has joined the
aquarian pack
and left you
a solo tune.

The studio is empty.

SYLVIA JONG

Second generation Chinese Canadian born in Toronto, 1956. B.A., University of Toronto. classical guitarist, massage therapist, interested in the integration of the healing arts, music, movement.

JOY KOGAWA

for a blank book (1)

no sound
but that breath
is round with speech
and all the trumpets
surrounding Jericho
sound the same note

mute music
as undemanding
as the shape of doves
as cautious
and as private
as the shedding of names

empty
is the city
in which even
the hiding
is hidden

for a blank book (2)

i have peculiar
leaf shaped ears
my fur is
forest coloured

when your flesh
first uttered words
i lost understanding

you said i attend
stone and not flesh
source and not blood
bread and not bone

your flesh
your blood
your bone

which brings you to
mistrust of me

and all the while
the stone bleeds
the source calls your name
the bread is broken

but you cannot see
or hear
or taste

listen, then, my love,
to the wind blowing
and the sound of breath
over the grassy forest floor

but know i did not bend
to the right or to the left
all the while
that i loved you

parting shots

i am sitting in this puddle
of hairs here in this
forest of bulrushes of
swampland trees i am
sitting watching the small
kingfisher bird and the twig
and the blue i am watching
all the land around this
morning moving slow as
sleep and snail -- even the
flight of birds is caught
on film and still as a
cat's startled stare i see
the falling bird its
one wing lifted forever
as it salutes the earth and
you with rifle and waterproof boots
and there my camera and
click, the tiny ,
language of terror don't
go please without at least
breakfast

JOY KOGAWA

Born in Vancouver, B.C. of Japanese extraction. Member of the League of Canadian Poets. Lives in Toronto. Author of The Splintered Moon *(Fiddlehead Press)*, A Choice of Dreams *(McClelland & Stewart)*, Jericho Road *(McClelland & Stewart)*.

SEAN GUNN

assimilation

by any means
bleach out your jeans
and when they fade
you've got it made

and you wonder where the yellow went
when you brush yourself with a permanent
brighter than bright
whiter than white
ninety nine forty four one hundred percent
and you wondered, where the yellow went?

your ideal date
the great playmate
thigh high pie
in the sky
centre spread
across your head

oh mirror, mirror on the wall
who is the fairest, beneath it all?

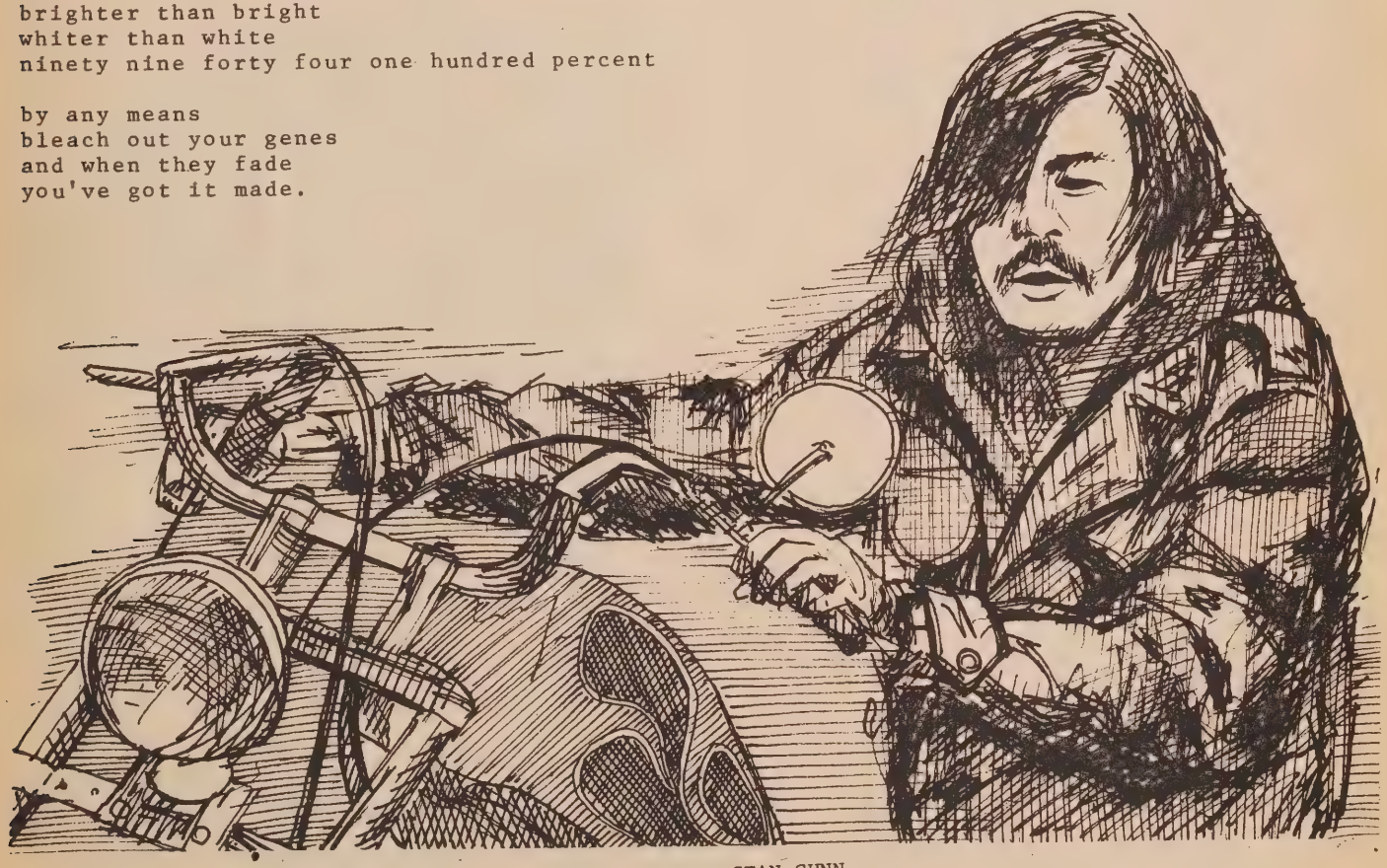
and we wondered where the yellow went
when we brushed ourselves with a permanent
brighter than bright
whiter than white
ninety nine forty four one hundred percent

by any means
bleach out your genes
and when they fade
you've got it made.

Orientation #1

in the world today
Chinese
are people
who live in China

on the local scene
Chinese
are adjectives
that modify people



SEAN GUNN

Active in the Vancouver Chinese community, a fourth generation Chinese Canadian poet and musician. Edited Inalienable Rice.

S. PADMANAB

DISCOVERY

This is the place:
around us are dark, pointed trees,
neither pine nor fir nor spruce,
with rings of peeling yellow,
shedding rounded fruit-stones
and feather-like petals,
carrying mixed fragrances,
jasmine and eucalyptus,
pomegranate and passion-flower,
yet none of these at all.

there is bird-music and water-sound,
swish of wings
and the crescendo of insects:
these are our songs.

shall we invent a new language
and a script;
shall it be flowery and sinuous,
or bare-lined,
reminding of steel-wire and sage-brush?
there is no time for such,
no time at all.

ii-

is our journey done?
is this the place?

shall we turn to each other,
the long walk over,
and look at ourselves this first time?

or shall we walk on
to an untempting time,
our faces yet averted,
our silence unbroken?

S. PADMANAB

THE MEMORY OF MY RACE

my forefathers
could placate a god
or cast a spell,
bargain with demons,
bribe them with words.

knowing no rituals,
i am haunted
by the chant of running trains,
thunder of apples falling,
and the hymns of
rain and wind.

nothing would i change
through devil or angel.
i will run with the dog,
ascend with the snail,
hang with the drop at the
tip of a leaf.

S. PADMANAB

Born in Bangalore, India. Practises medicine in Saskatchewan. Sometimes associate editor, Grain, A Separate Life, Songs of Slaves. *Member of League of Canadian Poets.*

CYRIL DABYDEEN

WORDS & LEGACY

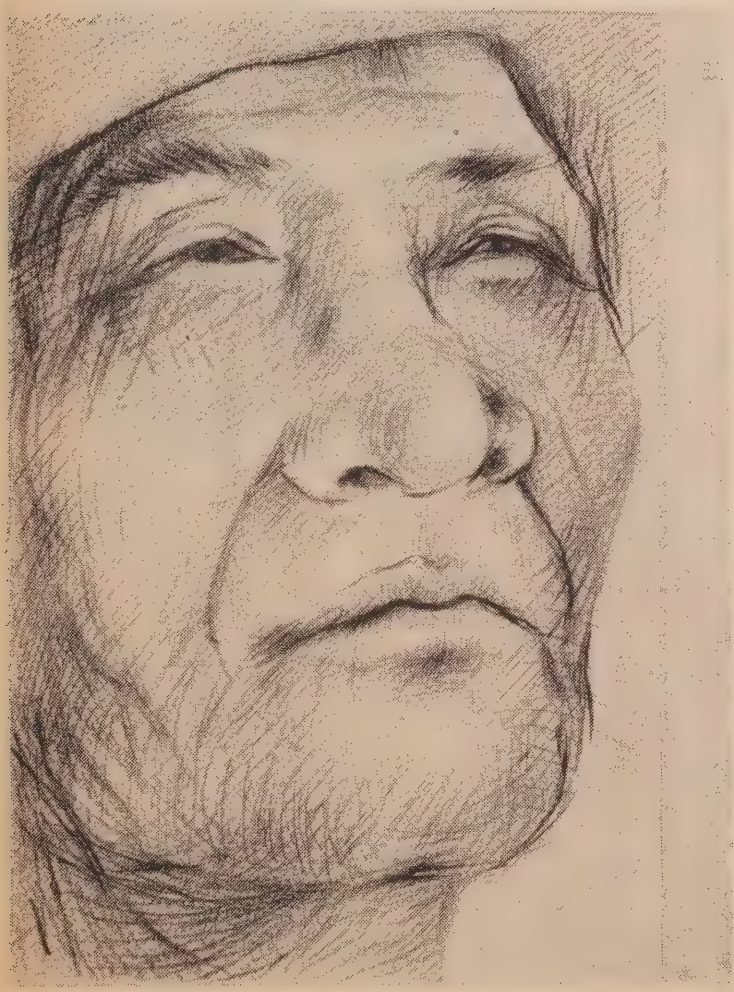
My father's life is alchemy
he tigntens a fist at the wind
he pushes himself with anger

At nights he berates all-comers
with a dagger-kill
the howling wind presages his death

I wake up from a dream after the first cock-crow
I remember how folklore is vivid
in nightmares--

how in frenzy a father's words
become the thin edge of a blade
he goes on living from day-to-day

making the sum blink



Last night we gathered
to sing old songs
despite the dryness in our throats

songs of politics, of being far away
from home; we exchanged bouquets
with truncated arms

we listen to the ocuntry
continue to praise itself
from afar

our throats continue
to itch because of the dryness
we are the rasping

song of night
we close our eyes and ears
we swallow

with pellets
we decry old friends
we begin

with a passion
we turn around and around
more than once

waiting for a dim season
our voices carry far
into the night

CYRIL DABYDEEN

From Guyana. Now living in Ottawa. Prolific writer (critical reviews, short stories, poetry, etc.) 6 books of poetry, latest fiction : Still Close to the Island. Member, League of Canadian Poets.

SHERALI HUSSEIN

THE IMMIGRANT

Have you seen the old man
his bone-dry fingers
twirling twisting tying,
making paper flowers
to fill his time?

Did you see him last winter
his knee-high galoshes
plodding trudging cursing,
dreaming sun-quenched fields
oceans away?

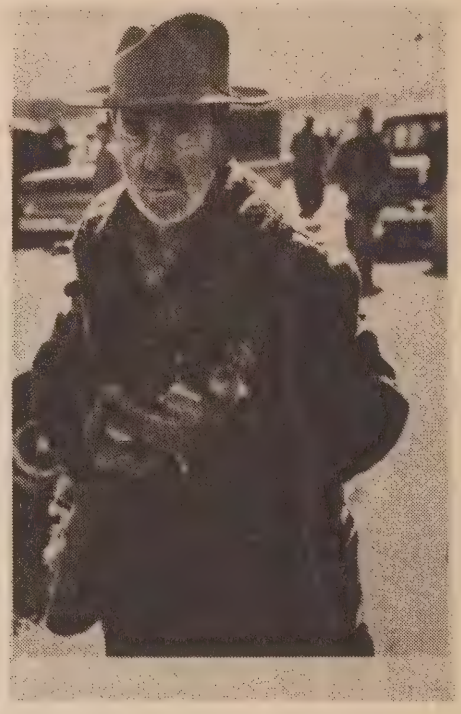
And have you heard him talk
to strangers/his friends
of children conspiring
and winter snows piling
to shroud his grave?

THE FIRST CALL

Like a sculptured phallus
the lone minaret
looms over the shantytown,
the pastel blue & gold
of its walls resplendent
in the first rays:
a painted prostitute
soliciting beggars.

Perched high in the tower
like a giant cocoon
the speaker waits, catches
the creeping sunlight
and, as if set off
by its charge, proclaims
the call from the muezzin.

Somewhere, his aches numbed
by night's drinking
the coolie sleeps on;
a spent whore stirs
momentarily
to consider the Prophet's wrath
dabs her sore thighs
and turns over.



SHERALI HUSSEIN

Born and raised in Tanzania. His grandparents were emigrants from pre-partition India. Studied in Britain and McMaster University. Works in Vancouver as a medical physicist for the Cancer Control Agency.

MIRMALA SINGH

POWERS TO BE

Is Life the eternal dream
borne from the womb of an ageless night?

Could Life be the mystery
remaining from the endless search
of each existence?

What of the knowledge
rushing across the paths of the sky?

And the new proceeds of evolution
unfolding the potentialities of Life?

Is Life the ageless light which
reflects the unburdened growth of Love?

Or could It be the
channel of information which lavishly
displays the wealth of nature?

What of the vision
dwelling inside the Self from which
transmits the Truth of our consciousness?

And what of the
unexplained chambers of Time?

Will the lonely theatre of Time
throne the meaning of our questions?

VENUS'S SON

for Don

You are the quiet man
with the charm of Venus,
who hears not only
the dry voices
of thirst, but also the
tapping of rats' feet over glass.

Our eyes may never reach
life's kingdom where the reflection
of romantic darkness in the skies
harmonize your impeccable taste
and social grace.

Sunlight dims in my face
in the morning
as I slide off my bed.

You are the simple man
with light thoughts
more precious than
a goddess's jewellery.

NIRMALA SINGH

Born in Guyana of East Indian parents. Lives in Ottawa. The Shiva Dance *(Vesta Publications)*

LAKSHMI GILL

Siu-Ling in the Snow

Siu-ling the terrible empress,
scourge of the grade fours,
whose tongue curls teachers' hair,
who outkicks the meanest boys--

Siu-Ling holds her red upturned
umbrella, delicately with one hand,
dances around and around the yard,
catches the first soft snowflake of the year.

LAKSHMI GILL

The author of five books of poetry including Novena to St. Jude Thaddeus *(Fiddlehead). A member of the Canadian League of Poets, currently teaching grade two at St. Francis Xavier School, the first Chinese mission school in B.C.*

A. WEERASINGHE

MONOTONES II
(for Nadia Potts)

You were white skinned, clinically
clean as a wedding guest
with a skull-cap, moving classically
with a remoteness as best
tuned to the Satien music
of a thousand eyes, following
you in the centre. Like a mystic
you remained poised to be lifted
into the air and shifted
by four strong arms that we
preferred to be blind not to see.
You moved creamed with the spotlight,
showing the dancer to our delight,
in the purity of the simple ballet
of her elegantly rounded beauty.

ASOKA WEERASINGHE

Born in Sri Lanka in 1936, came to Canada in 1968 after living in England for 12 years. M.Sc. in Paleontology from Memorial University.

photographs

YAN WONG

Day and Night in Toronto

Aminur Rahim

I have a secret love affair. This love affair is for the place where I live --- be it a rain drenched, South Asian village or a snow capped modern North American city. Despite my agony and suffering in life, my craving for life has remained evergreen. I care for everything in this world. All things reach me deeply, sweeping my life with their gentle touch.

My love affair with Toronto is universal, but it's a romantic one. It began at first sight. It is just between the two of us alone, where we and time stand. It is an instantaneous response. It is something I desired, something I cherished, but not something to be lived through --- a possession, rather than a relationship. It started from itself and will end in itself.

Toronto is a wonder city of North America --- the beautiful. It attracts immigrants and tourists alike. The city is bestowed with clean air, wide boulevards, parks and empty places to breathe. But Toronto has something else which I have fallen in love with--- the blue water of Lake Ontario. Like a few other privileged cities, Toronto stretches its hands towards the blue sky --- the city is open to the world. It has the flavour of cosmopolitanism but, nonetheless, it remains Hellascentric closed to its own shell and inwardly mobile. In Paris one can take shelter in the wings of exotic night life or in an intellectual realm; in London, in the wings of politics. But in Toronto people take asylum in material culture. One's needs and desires are determined in one's labour power. And this is the measuring rod of success in life.

It does not take long to know Toronto; the city is abound with faces of different colours and races. All look young. All come with a single hope : to improve one's lifestyle which would remain unfulfilled back at home. But happiness is an illusive concept. Conventionally, it is always measured by wealth, but not in self-improvement. Toronto seems like an empty place and is terribly lonely, shrouded with a drape of innocence. Like all other large, North American cities, Toronto offers a sensual look which in its turn breeds more desire in one's mind. In the process it creates illusion. As a result, a person feels isolated, lonely and deprived. It is not surprising that people in this city are abashedly cold and bottle up their feelings within themselves. Following rigid, Anglo-Saxon tradition, everyone in this city looks toward the opposite sex for solace. "Friendship" exists only between a male and a female. It is not possible to maintain a warm relationship with a person of the same sex because of the fear of being dubbed as a homosexual.

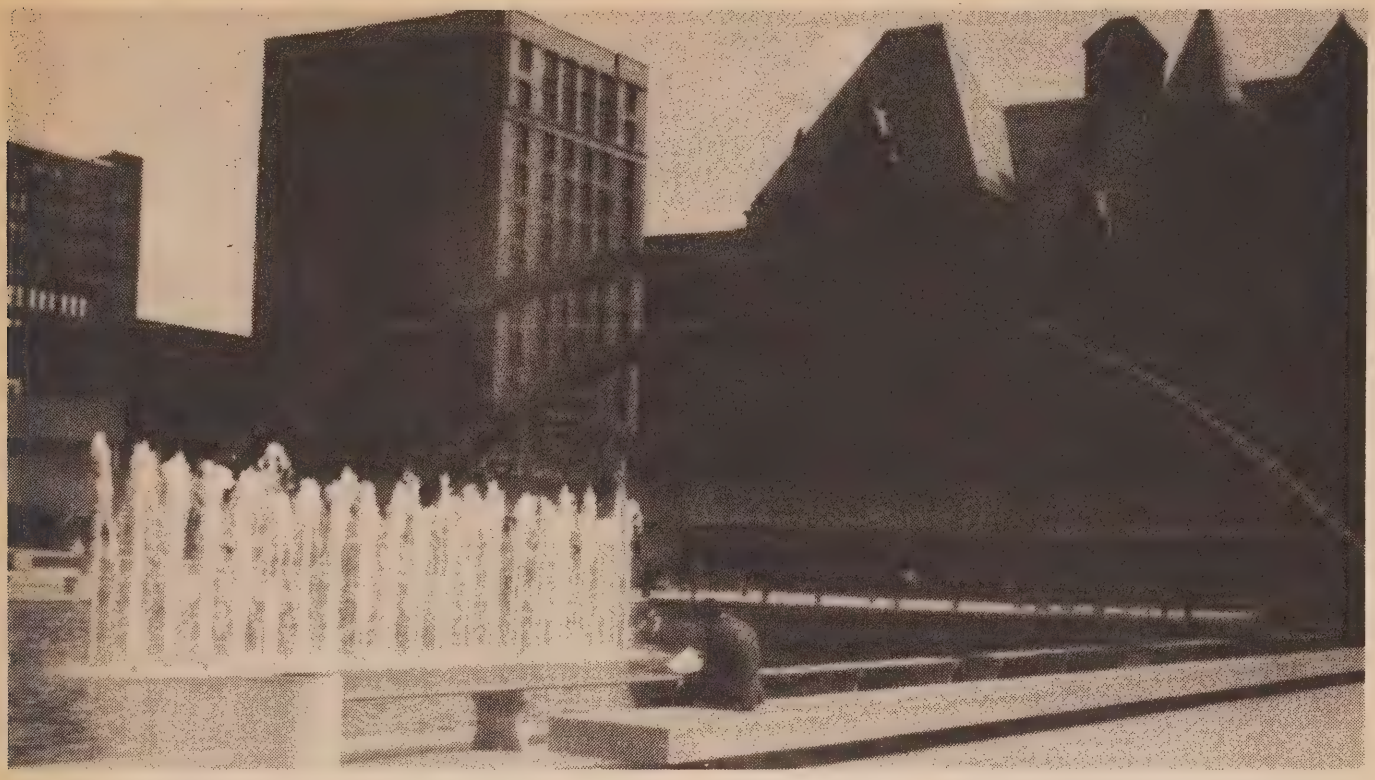
Success is measured in terms of material possession. Everything boils down to dollars and cents. The young people in this city are terribly illiterate and ignorant about everything. Throughout their youth, people in this city try to be professional --- in short, "a pro". Toronto needs a Canadian experience. It demands that a person should bring experience from the womb of mother. Old age haunts the young minds. They want to escape from the agony of isolation and the loneliness of the nursing-home. To those who are young, life stretches before them like an uncharted ocean, full of the mystery of the unknown. It is almost saying :

Agar firdaus bar ruyi zamin ast,
Hamin ast, hamin ast, hamin ast !

If on earth be an Eden of bliss,
It is this, it is this, it is this !

In Toronto young people show unbounded faith in the future and success, like a magician who believes in his witchcraft. Everything is possible under the sun of Toronto. A person is poor because he/she is not smart. For the time being, history stands before Toronto like a prisoner. Time stands in a standstill. Amid hope and illusion it suspends its journey. Alas! the time will not stay. Like a speck of dirt it flies fast to infinity.

For those who are old there is nothing here to rely on, but only a flitting blush of passing young women, the cool smile of waitresses, the lake, wide sunshine, empty benches in the park, motionless monotony and tall apartment buildings overlooking Lake Ontario. An old man in Toronto is a paradigm of solitude. He is an outcast because he is unproductive, lives on an old age pension. With nowhere to go to shed his humanity harassed by young punks and haunted by time, he becames a burden for the city. He seeks his salvation in beer and whisky. He aimlessly looks at the empty glass of beer and takes a deep sigh. Waitresses look at him with limpid eyes and assure him he is having a nice time. So, it is no surprise that my love for Toronto remains marginal.



Toronto demands silence, work and production. Only young blood satisfies Toronto's inhuman desires. In the neighbourhood pool club smoke hangs in the air. Young men take pride in their machismo and boast about their exploits. The young women in this city wait for phone calls, wait to be taken out by their boyfriends for a sumptuous dinner and the latest horror movie. In Toronto young people still talk endlessly about disco. "Disco nowadays is professional. To enter a discotheque one needs an elaborate dress, i.e., costume. At dusk when the sun goes down in the distant horizon, leaving behind orange and amber, the city becomes flooded with purple and green neon-lights; young people line up to dance in the floating world of the Holiday Inn. Day enters into the womb of darkness and night sets sail for assignation. The city gradually becomes empty. At King and Bay high rise corporate buildings stand in silence. Few people can be seen around except Portugese night cleaners. Most of them can't speak English : "Me Portugese, speak no english". Far from the Azores or Madeira they work tirelessly through the night to clean and shine Toronto, so that it will be ready the next morning for production. They work hard and save money; they want to forget their bitter days back at home. Coffee break can evoke nostalgia. The carefree, slow and kinly atmosphere back at home looms large in their minds. They begin to mutter that one of these days they will buy a ticket and visit their folks in Madeira or the Azores.

Toronto at night is also being watched by the mysterious "werewolfof Spadina" and there are hundreds of other people who sleep outside. They have no place to go. In winter they sleep outside on hot-air vents, near manholes and in stairwells, downtown. Those who are scooped off the street by the Salvation Army Cadets complain about having to sleep on the dirty floor at All Saints Church.

Love for one's life is universal. It sprouts only in relation to others. It is only through love that human beings experience the meaning of their lives. Relentless curiosity to know the unknown makes our lives enjoyable. But when we are cut off from the unknown and expand our minds in the realms of work and consumption, life tends to become boring and monotonous. There is not much to enjoy but noise and cacophony. Excessive poverty or excessive wealth makes one's life nasty, brutish and short and beneath it all there sprouts jealousy, contempt and ignorance of others. It's hardly surprising that the KKK is making headway in Toronto. But life is not like that. Love for life means "to stand upright for good", and not to resign in despair. As darkness disappears in the morning glow, Toronto, likes a maple tree, spreads its aroma in the minds of conscious, young people. And the young people get ready to sweeten the fragrance of Toronto through the desire ot know the unknown. They offer their gentle love at the altar of hope, future and progress.

on behalf of japanese canadians

Roger Obata

The following article, by Roger S. Obata, *was one of the three presentations of Japanese Canadians made before the Joint Parliamentary Committee on the Canadian Constitution in November 1980.*

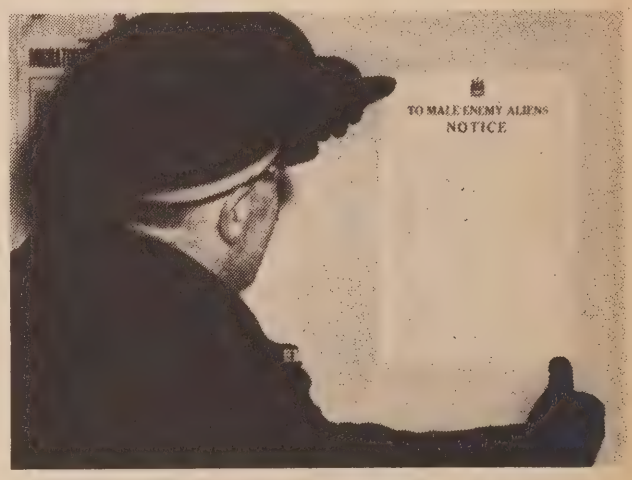
Let me express my appreciation for this opportunity of presenting my story relative to the entrenchment of the Charter of Rights in the Charter of Rights in the Canadian Constitution. We are here to reveal the facts which you may never have known. In disclosing these historical facts, we hope to show how insidious, cruel, and unfair racial discrimination can be. Only people who have lived through the humiliation and indignity resulting from bigotry, can appreciate the necessity for a guarantee of human and civil rights.

My story is that of a Japanese Canadian veteran of World War II. I think my experiences and struggle in trying to enlist in the armed services of Canada is typical of the problems faced by several hundred Japanese Canadian volunteers during World War II. Let me start at the beginning. You have heard about the Evacuation from the previous speakers so I will not elaborate on that subject. However, I feel it is relevant to my story to relate the effect of the Evacuation on me personally.

Our family consisted of just my mother and I since I had neither brothers nor sisters, and had lost my father in 1937. So my mother lived alone in Prince Rupert, B.C. since I was living in Toronto. When the Evacuation order was issued people in Prince Rupert had 24 hours to vacate their homes. They were only allowed whatever luggage they could carry. My mother who left our home, locking up our personal belongings in a small room, never saw her home again. All our personal belongings and furniture were looted prior to the forced sale of our home.

After the Evacuation from British Columbia and some period of detention in the concentration camps in the interior of B.C. many evacuees came east to re-settle in Toronto around 1943-44. At that time the first organization to be formed in Toronto was called the Japanese Canadian Committee for Democracy - or J.C.C.D for short. The main purpose of this organization was to assist in the re-settlement of the evacuees from B.C. But in addition, it took a leadership role on such issues as the enlistment question for Japanese Canadians by advocating enlistment in the armed services.

For not only were we forcibly evicted from B.C., but to add insult to injury we were not even allowed to serve the armed forces of our country in time of war. The majority of our friends said we were crazy to advocate enlistment after the way we were kicked around in B.C.. However, the stand taken by the J.C.C.D. was that we could not accept discrimination in any form, even in the matter of service in the armed forces of Canada. For to do so, would be to accept an inferior status as a second class citizen. Since the whole Evacuation was based on a suspected disloyalty, the J.C.C.D. was determined to prove the loyalty of Japanese Canadians by advocating enlistment in spite of the outrageous treatment that was forced upon them in B.C. it was the ultimate of turning the other cheek. And, needless to say, we were scorned by many of our fellow Japanese Canadians.



Just at this time a British army officer, Captain Mollison, appeared on the scene in Toronto. He had been sent by Lord Louis Mountbatten to recruit Japanese Canadians to serve as translators and interpreters in South East Asia where the British were fighting the Japanese. The interpreters were required to interrogate prisoners, while translators were necessary for the propaganda broadcasts to the enemy, as well as translating captured enemy documents.

Captain Mollison first contacted the J.C.C.D. of which I was chairman. When we told him that the Canadian government wouldn't accept us in the armed services he was flabbergasted. He said it was simply unbelievable that here were Japanese

Canadians willing to give their lives for their country, to fill a very desperate need for the allied cause in South East Asia, and they were being denied this right. He was so indignant at this, that he went to Ottawa to meet with Defense Minister Ralston to try to persuade the Minister to change the government's policy of refusing the enlistment of Japanese Canadians. He met with no success.

Desperate for Japanese Canadian linguists to serve with the British Army, Captain Mollison suggested that we join the British Army. After considerable discussion by the executive of the J.C.C.D. we decided that our objective would be lost be enlisting in the British Army. The whole object of enlisting was to serve our country in Canadian uniform like any other Canadian. To serve in British uniform would be defeating the whole purpose.

So the J.C.C.D. recommended to all volunteers that they refuse to serve in the British Army and insist that the Canadian government open up the enlistment for Japanese Canadians. Some of the volunteers were too impatient and lacked confidence in the federal government after their sad experiences in B.C., so they signed up with Captain Mollison. The first contingent of 12 Nisei volunteers departed for South East Asia in the Spring of 1944. They were the forerunners of some 35 young men who served with the British Army in S.E.Asia.

For some unexplained reason which I will reveal later, several weeks after the J.C.C.D. took the firm stand not to serve in uniform unless it was the Canadian uniform, the government in Ottawa abruptly reversed its stand and decided to accept Japanese Canadians in the Canadian Army. It was a complete surprise to us. Within a month, general enlistment fot the Canadian Intelligence Corps was wide open. Some 150 volunteers enlisted and took basic training at Brantford, Ontario. After our basic training we proceeded to Vancouver, B.C. to take the Japanese language course at the S-20 Military Language School. There, classes in Japanese, from elementary courses to senior and advanced cources, were given as related to military intelligence. Graduates from this school were sent to S.E. Asia to serve in various theatres of war from the Dutch East Indies to Burma to Hong Kong.

In the book *Yankee Samurai*, by Joseph Harrington, which tells the story of the Japanese Americans serving in the Pacific War, it is stated that these linguists shortened the war by two years and saved one million lives! We are proud to say we were a part of that contribution in World War II, albeit a small part.

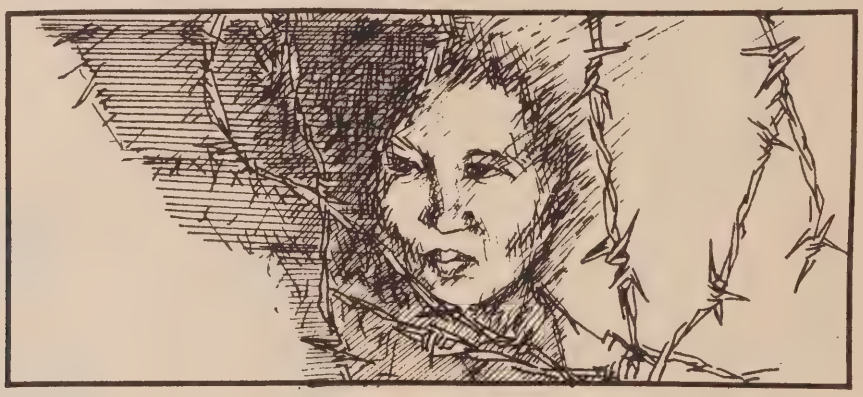
I mentioned earlier that I would elaborate on the reason for the sudden reversal of policy by the Canadian government on the enlistment of Japanese Canadians into the Canadian Armed Services. It is a very interesting story, and one which was not revealed until after the 30 year official secrecy period had elapsed. It was first made public by the late Judy LaMarsh who served with me in Washington, D.C. as part of the Canadian Army Intelligence Corps on loan to the U.S. Army. Judy exposed this story on a radio programme from Toronto which I have taped.

After Captain Mollison contacted me regarding the recruiting of Japanese Canadians, and after we had refused to serve in the British Army because of the Canadian government's policy regarding our enlistment, Captain Mollison sent a "signal" to Lord Louis Mountbatten stating why he was unable to recruit Japanese Canadians. Upon learning of this ridiculous situation in Canada, Lord Mountbatten immediately advised Winston Churchill of this problem. Mr. Churchill lost no time in contacting Prime Minister MacKenzie King in Ottawa and before we knew it, Ottawa had completely reversed its position on the enlistment question. So, it might be said that we have Sir Winston Churchill to thank for making it possible for us to enlist in the Canadian Army. I wonder what Mr. Churchill said to MacKenzie King.

I hope that what I have related will give some idea of what it meant to be Japanese Canadian in British Columbia. It was as though we were living in a different country, and I am sure what you have heard must sound foreign to you, and not Canadian. But it is factual and it did happen right here in Canada. We had lived through the worst kind of racism in B.C. for more than 70 years, as you have already heard. Imagine having to pay taxes for over 70 years without the right to vote. And I'm sure you have difficulty in believing that in a *democratic* country like Canada, the government can confiscate one's home and sell it without the owner's consent for whatever price was convenient. My home was disposed of, in this way, while I was in Canadian uniform.

Surely, some guarentee of human and civil rights is mandatory in the light of the experiences of Japanese Canadians. Unless a Charter of Rights within the Constitution supercedes emergency regulations such as the War meausres Act, it would be meaningless, as we have tried to show with our presentation. A Charter of Rights entrenched tn the constitution to prevent what we have gone through, is the least that Canada can do to make amends for what has happened to us, and to ensure that such injustices will never be repeated. Thank you.

Reviews



Within the Barbed Wire Fence: A Japanese Man's Account of his Internment in Canada, by Takeo Ujo Nakano with Leatrice Nakano. Afterword by W. Peter Ward, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980,) 126pp.

Within the Barbed Wire Fence, the account of one man's internment in Canada during World War II, should take its place among a growing body of documents which have brought into public view the gross injustices inflicted upon Japanese Canadians in their forced evacuation from the West Coast and their subsequent internment in designated areas across Canada. From February to October in 1942, over 22,000 men, women and children, under the direct control of the B.C. Security Commission -- the authority established by the federal government to carry out the evacuation order -- were uprooted from their homes and their property and belongings confiscated. And whatever rights they may have thought to enjoy as Canadian citizens were stripped away as well. In fact, it would take a full four years for more politically conscious Canadians to become suddenly aware that fellow Canadians were being blatantly victimized on the basis of their ancestry alone. The uproar that ensued when news spread of, not to thousands of *Canadian* citizens about to be deported without having committed a crime -- without even being charged with a crime! -- proved to be so strong that the Liberal government of Mackenzie King quickly shelved its plans. But public conscience, in another sense, arrived too late. By 1946 the evacuation was complete, and there was nothing left on the West Coast for the vast majority of Japanese Canadians. According to an earlier government plan, a plan virtually unquestioned since 1942, they had been effectively dispersed, as the saying then went, "east of the Rockies." Given the far-reaching implications of this event in Canadian history, *Within The Barbed Wire Fence*, though perhaps, at first glance, too slender an account to have a large impact on Canadian readers, should not be allowed to pass by unnoticed.

Takeo Nakano is an Issei(first generation Japanese in Canada) and his story is "the only substantial account of the experiences and reflections of an Issei," as W. Peter Ward says in his "Afterword". It sets Nakano's life within its historical context for readers unfamiliar with Japanese Canadian history. Based on diaries Nakano had the foresight to keep during the 1940's and translated and expanded in collaboration with his daughter Leatrice, his book offers us a first-hand insight into the experiences of one man who was permanently and utterly changed by the evacuation. Nakano speaks of the shock of his forced separation from his wife and child and his loneliness in the road camps where he was sent. He also reveals, through intimate details, how it felt to be unjustly branded an "enemy alien" and interned in a prisoner-of-war camp at Angler, Ontario. At the time, the extremity of the government's orders seemed so incomprehensible -- what "blind forces" (Nakano's word) were at work? And what had they in store for him? Was his evacuation and internment an act of fate? Speaking

of his life in Woodfibre, B.C., a small town in Howe Sound where he was living, and had been living relatively isolated from the outside world for 20 years when he was ordered to leave, Nakano comments, "We Japanese, largely working-class immigrants, were, generally speaking, not given to sophisticated political thinking."

And like so many Japanese immigrants, most of them unable to speak English, Nakano was powerless before the contradictory power of a government whose left hand espoused the principle of Canadian "fairness and justice" (Mackenzie King's words), but whose right hand acted as if such a principle never existed. Nor could Nakano have forseen the extent of the widespread hatred directed toward all members of the Japanese Canadian community. When he peacefully left Woodfibre, he still believed that his removal from the coast was only temporary. He would, or as he had been led to assume, soon be able to return home and resume his former life. On first entering Vancouver, however, he must have been shocked to realize that the entire community was under attack. Thousands of men, women and children were being brought daily to Vancouver and placed in the Livestock Buildings at Hastings Street Park; the atmosphere of the city was charged with animosity. Most of the evacuees were dumbfounded and confused, wondering what they had done to be handled in such a barbaric way. "We were set apart," Nakano writes, "wrapped in uncertainty and irritability." What he was here encountering, for the first time, was the crest of a massive wave of public prejudice. And whatever voice he or others like him might have raised against it was drowned out by the hysterical rhetoric of those in B.C. who wanted nothing less than to rid the Japanese Canadians from the province. "Let our slogan be for British Columbia : *"No Japs from the Rockies to the seas,"* as the Minister of Pensions and National Health Ian Mackenzie was to say in a speech.[1] Such unabashed public sentiments give some indication of the outright power of a long-standing racism in B.C. that Nakano, one individual among thousands, saw flare into action. As Ward says in his "Afterword,"

> From the late 1850's, when the first Chinese immigrants arrived, anti-Orientaliam was endemic on the west coast. Not all whites were racist, nor were their prejudices always aroused. But the anti-Oriental consensus was extremely broad and enduring. Before the Pacific War it dominated all public discussions of matters related to Asian Canadians and it encountered virtually no contradiction.

Against what we might have expected, Nakano does not lament the loss of his freedom. Nor does he harbour a bitter antagonism toward Canadian society and use his story to vindicate the Japanese Canadian community. There are no attacks on racists, no diatribes. Quite the contrary, his story veers away in an opposite direction altogether. Forced into confinement, first in the road camps, finally in Anglers, the central focus of his narrative, Nakano came to rediscover the aesthetic quality of the Canadian landscape and the mysterious beauty of its subtle textures. It was in the Canadian wilderness, estranged as an "enemy alien", that he underwent his reawakening as a poet, struck as he was by the elemental power of nature becaues of his own helpless situation.

> At this time of vulnerability," he explains,
> My spirit was malleable, susceptible to any compelling power. As it happened, nature was to be that power. The tanka would serve both to order my perception of nature and to give expression to that perception.[2]

And much of Nakano's account is devoted to this internal transformation of his perception as the crucial event which sustained him throughout his internment.

In many vital ways, then, *Within the Barbed Wire Fence* can be read as an autobiographical narrative of Nakano's growth as a poet, a growth that stirred up dim but intimate memories of a Japanese past wherein the appreciation of nature was still of primary value. And yet the poetry of this intermingling of the past and the present, it should be emphasized, was not an attempt on Nakano's part to retreat into a nostalgic past at the expense of an unbearable present. The tanka translated in his story capture live moments of his internment. An English version of one is especially moving for the way it presents directly and concretely the stifling atmosphere of the Livestock Buildings at Hastings Street Park:

> Reek of manure,
> Stench of livestock,
> And we were herded,
> Milling--
> Jumble of the battlefield.

Ken Adachi in his carefully documented analysis of the evacuation in *The Enemy That Never Was* points out that the treatment of the Japanese Canadians in Hastings Park (over 8,000 people suffered through it) still remains the most appropriate metaphor of government attitudes toward them throughout the war, "herded" as they were into the Livestock Buildings, to road camps in the B.C. interior, to internment camps in the Kootenays, or to sugar beet farms in Alberta and Manitoba.[3] More importantly, his study also makes visible the political context behind what Nakano, understandably, could only apprehend as "blind forces." The mass evacuation of the Japanese was not, in fact, the end result of a thoughtfully considered decision on the part of the federal government to protect Canadians from the invasion of Japanese forces aided by disloyal Japanese Canadians. Adachi's more realistic appraisal of the evacuation demonstrates that the decision to remove the Japanese Canadian community outside the special "protected area" 100 miles from the coast was, at root, a political rather than a defense measure. From this perspective, phrases the government

used to justify its evacuation policy --- "national security" and "military necessity" --- were, more often than not, simply foisted on uninformed Canadians during the war to gloss over what was, more truthfully, the working machinery of a deeply rooted racism in their society.

Immediately after the bombing of Pearl Harbour on December 7, 1941, a number of social and political groups in B.C. began to churn up antagonism toward the local Japanese Canadian population, politicians such as Ian Mackenzie, A.W. Neill, Thomas Reid, and Howard Green at the forefront. And they urged the federal government to remove the Japanese from their province. On January 8 and 9, representatives from B.C. met in Ottawa to present their case concerning what was conveniently labelled the "Japanese problem." At that meeting the army, the navy, and the RCMP did not consider Japanese Canadians a threat to national security. All the fishing boats owned by Japanese Canadian fishermen had already been impounded, and the few apparently potential dissidents had been rounded up by the RCMP. In short, at this time, a month after Pearl Harbour, the federal government had no intention of evacuating the Japanese from the coast.

All kinds of wild rumours, nevertheless, began to spread of an impending invasion of B.C. by Japanese forces acting in collaboration with Japanese Canadians, though as Adachi demonstrates, the rumours were never to be substantiated by any actual threats --- and some evidence even suggests that many rumours were created in order to stir up, and mobilize, anti-Japanese attitudes. Thus pressured by the unwavering and almost hysterical outcry of B.C. politicians, the federal government compromised by agreeing to a partial evacuation. Only male Japanese nationals from 18-45 years of age, now categorized as "enemy aliens", were to be removed from the "protected area" 100 miles east of the coast. The federal government was reluctant to evacuate the whole community, and understandably so : not only were 75 percent of them Canadian citizens by birth or naturalization, not one member of the community was charged with any act of sabotage. Besides, there were no indications that any Japanese Canadians would betray Canada. But such considerations were soon ignored completely. The policy calling for a partial evacuation, as it turned out, was short-lived. By March 4, using the unconditional powers granted by the War Measures Act to control, evacuate, imprison, or even deport Canadians without charging them with any crime, the federal government would establish the B.C. Security Commission to police the *mass* evacuation of all Japanese Canadians, regardless of citizenship. Racism finally won its day --- and in the long months that lay ahead, the entire Japanese Canadian population was swept up into a process that would lead to nothing less than the destruction of their community on the west coast. This extreme decision on the part of the Liberal government of Mackenzie King, Adachi concludes, "represented expediency rather than conviction, for the announcement of mass evacuation on February 26, 1942, represented a complete retreat from earlier policy and constituted a capitulation to racist pressure." [4]

Takeo Nakano's story opens in Woodfibre where he had settled in 1922 to work at the Woodfibre Mill of the B.C. Pulp and Paper Company. He lived there with some 500 other Japanese, half the town's population, segregated from the "Whites," but otherwise carrying on "amiable" relations with them (though not surprisingly the non-English speaking Japanese were paid less and held the more menial jobs). Nakano took a trip to Japan in 1930 and came back married, intending at that time to save enough money eventually to re-settle permanently in Japan. The plan was not an uncommon one among Issei men. And had Pearl Harbour not occurred, he may very well lived out his old age in the village of his birth in 1903, Takatsuka, in Fukuoka-ken on the island of Kyushu.

All such continuities were erased by the evacuation. As a Japanese national, Nakano, just under 40 at the time, was ordered to leave Woodfibre on March 16, 1942, one of the first of some 1,700 male nationals sent to so-called "road projects" in the B.C. interior. After spending five horrific days in the Livestock Buildings in Vancouver, on March 21, he found himself boarding a CNR train that transported groups of men to designated camps along the Alberta-B.C. border. Nakano was dropped in Yellowhead. "In the deep snow," he writes, "a string of twelve freight cars (on loan from the CNR) awaited us as our home." Here, "haunted by anxiety" concerning his future, he started to

keep a record of his thoughts in a diary, right from the beginning aware that if he were to die during his internment a written account might possibly leave some "trace" of his experiences.

Three weeks later, Nakano was moved to Descoigne, a few miles away, where he would remain for three months. Near the end of July, he was assured by representatives of the B.C. Security Commission that he could rejoin his wife and child, both of them relocated in an internment camp at Greenwood. But later, other representatives of the B.C. Security Commission (and such inconsistencies would become a normal part of the treatment of Japanese Canadians during the evacuation) reneged on the earlier agreement. Instead of being allowed to go to Greenwood, Nakan was ordered to go to Slocan where he was supposedly needed to build housing for more evacuees. At Slocan, angered by the Security Commission's failure to keep its word, he and fourteen other men who shared the same predicament protested by refusing to work for four days. They were quickly and unhesitantly categorized as "resisters" and sent under an RCMP guard to the Immigration Building jail in Vancouver, a move which meant for certain that they would all eventually end up in the prison-of-war camp at Angler.

Nakano was thus soon to experience the fate of those Japanese Canadians who actively opposed the evacuation orders. He explains his arrival at the Immigration Building jail,

> The over thirty Japanese inmates who were already there rejoiced at the arrival of fellows who they of course assumed shared their cause. You see, these inmates were what were known as *gambariya*. They were best described as rebels against the treatment they were receiving in time of war. The Nesei (second generation, or Canadian-born Japanese) *gambariya* were protesting such unjust treatment of Canadian citizens as they were experiencing, the Issei *gambariya* firmly believed in Japan's eventual victory and looked forward to the Canadian government's enforced compensation to them. These men had actively sought confinement and looked forward to the challenge of internment at the Angler prisoner-of-war camp. The sentiments of us newcomers were quite the opposite : we had absolutely no desire to be imprisoned.

The decision to imprison those who opposed the evacuation, we soon realize, was a punitive rather than a military measure. Those sent to Angler were being punished for their resistance --- and Nakano along with them. And so, in less than a month, on August 30, he too found himself entering the "imposing wooden gates, about sixteen feet high and covered with barbed wire." Once inside, he was immediately struck by the red circles on the backs of the shirts worn by the prisoners :

> Covering the entire back,
> The rising sun on their shirts
> The inmates are made to wear.
> Ecstatic are the wearers ---
> But what a fine target.

Nakano's poem dramatizes the sharp edge of a tension that runs through the chapters on Angler, close to one-half of his book. Conversation in the camp was dominated by the *gambariya*, those Issei and Nesei who accepted imprisonment as an act of defiance against the Canadian government. Many of them lived with the belief that Japan would win the war and that the Canadian government would later compensate them for the injustices they were presently being made to suffer. Although Nakano could sympathize with their cause --- by then he certainly knew the injustice of his own internment --- he felt himself alienated from their political position. And he soon became wary of their views. With no radios or newspapers, and with a rigid censorship applied to all letters sent or received, all information concerning the course of the war was meagre, in many cases slanted by those who wanted to believe that Japan would win. Alone, Nakano was left with his own mixed responses.

Internment at Angler had come so swiftly for him. In a few short months, he had gone from a quiet and relatively secure life in Woodfibre to a prioner-of-war camp. His life had been radically altered, and as far as he could see, for nothing more than his desire to be reunited with his family. The dislocating effect of this bizarre twist of events surfaced fully inside Angler, as he writes,

> --- the miles upon miles of one move after another, culminating in the arrival at Angler --- scenes crowded together and revolved in my mind, as if in a magic lantern show, until dizziness overcame me.

But as the days did inevitably pass, he slowly allowed his mind to sink into the daily routines : minimal work to keep the camp going, regular walks around the "oval track along the fence" inside the compound, reading Japanese poetry, and writing. Such daytime semblances of order, however, often gave way at night when he would be plagued by the surreal quality of his estrangement from his former life. "In those unsettled times," he says,

> it was not unusual for my eyes to open suddenly in the dead of night. Then they would invariably be drawn towards the light of the bright lamp at the fence. Its unnatural glare could still arouse an eerie sensation in me. The bush country all around us lay in darkness.

It was also at Angler, though, that Nakano and others formed a club to write *haiku* poetry. They would meet weekly to discuss the *haiku* that

members of the group had written during the week. They eventually even published an anthology at Angler, *Tessaku no Seki* ('loneliness within the barbed wire fence'), in an edition of 35 copies "individually handwritten by the contributors." In this way, the imaginative stimulation afforded by the group helped to draw him outside of his alienation. He soon began, as he had in the road camps, noticing the minutiae of the natural world surrounding Angler :

> Ants, praying mantises, grasshoppers, toads, all manner of small creatures entered through the fencing. I became unwittingly attracted to these fleeting life forms. Soon I was writing a tanka about each of them and growing to love them. Especially the praying mantis.

> Facing me,
> Sicklelike forelimbs thrown
> up in front ---
> Praying mantis.
> Bulging eyeballs,
> Black and loveable.

For the most part, of course, Nakano's adjustment to the daily monotony of camp life was the natural consequence of an uncertain future. He had no idea how long he would be interned. After nearly a year's confinement, he was even shocked at how were he had adapted, so well in fact that the artificial world of the camp was undermining an earlier urge to leave. It was fortunately at this time that he got wind of news that prisoners willing to accept prearranged jobs in Ontario were being released. He quietly submitted his application, mostly in secrecy, knowing full well that the *gambariya* held in contempt those who decided to re-settle in Ontario, a move they interpreted as a capitulation to the racist policies of the Canadian government. Nakano himself experienced this hostility --- one of the *gambariya* "spit on him" -- when he left Angler to work for Canada Packers in Toronto (where, incidentally, he would work for the next 25 years, or until his retirement in 1968). And the following month, in December, he was finally reunited with his family. They had been separated for 21 months, fourteen of which Nakano had spent at Angler.

No doubt, many readers will value *Within the Barbed Wire Fence* for the inside perspective it provides on the disrupting consequences of the evacuation on the internal life of the Japanese Canadian community. The book is, as Ward comments, "the clearest glimpse we have of Japanese loyalism and internment camp life during the second world war." And yet, its rich documentary value aside, Nakano's story is just as clearly the testimony of a poet who sustained himself in his internment through the strength of his aesthetic sensibility. This more intimate side to the account, though never made explicit, certainly receives the most attention by Nakano himself. And perhaps it is this sensibility which finally brings into sharp relief the barbed political conditions that necessitated his poetry. Subdued by the totalitarian power of a government policy that reduced him to the non-status of an object to be controlled and disposed of, Nakano ironically became acutely aware of the particularity of nature and the human immediacy of "fleeting life forms." His subsequent affirmation of a mode of consciousness in touch with the inherent freedom of life forms that enact the open-ended process of nature thus counteracts but equally exposes --- by vivid contrast --- the barbarism of an authority that over and over refused to acknowledge how unjustly it was manipulating the lives of *real* people. Racism had so seamlessly permeated Canadian society that for four years its overriding presence went completely unchecked. Those like Nakanowho settled in Toronto really had no choice. Woodfibre had become but a fragment of an obliterated past. The Nakano who began rebuilding his life in Toronto had turned into an immigrant all over again.

A brief postscript written by Leatrice informs us that a *tanka* by her father "was one of twelve chosen from 46,886 entries in the annual Imperial Poetry Contest" for 1964, the first time a Canadian poet was honoured in this manner. Takeo Nakano became a Canadian citizen in 1948 and the poem preserves that moment :

> As final resting place,
> Canada is chosen.
> On citizenship paper,
> Signing
> Hand trembles.

by Roy Miki

FOOTNOTES

1. Quoted by Ken Adachi in *The Enemy That Never Was : A History of the Japanese Canadians*. (Toronto : McClelland and Stewart, 1976), p. 279.
2. The *tanka* ('the short poem'), a traditional poetic form in Japan, consists of five lines with a fixed number of syllables in each line, 5, 7, 5, 7, and 7 syllables respectively, in total 31 syllables. The 17 syllable *haiku*, a more recent form that developed in the latter half of the 19th century, during the Meiji Era, is a simplified version of the *tanka*, 3 lines with 5, 7, and 5 syllables respectively. Most likely North Americans are more familiar with the *haiku*, especially through its popularization by 20th century North American poets, than they are with the classical *tanka*, the form that appeals to Nakano. Unfortunately, the English versions of the *tanka* included in Nakano's account "have been translated," we are told in a note, "in such a way as to preserve their meaning and phrasing but not their syllabic structure."
3. My comments on Adachi's analysis of the evacuation are drawn mainly from pages 199-277 of *The Enemy That Never Was*.
4. Adachi, p. 215.

The Rise and Fall of the KU KLUX KLAN

maryka omatsu

INTRODUCTION

When an organization like th Klu Klux Klan, which supports and promotes racist and fascist ideology, sets up an office in Toronto, there is cause for concern. An examination of the history of the Klan in the United States will, I think, provide us with greater insight as to how to deal with the Klan in Canada and with the general problem of racism.

HISTORY OF THE KLU KLUX KLAN

"Ku Klux Klan" originates from the Greek word for circle, "Ku Klos". Count Pulaski, a Pole, together with six others, founded the first den in 1865 in Tennessee near Alabama border. It began as a white southern pro-Confederacy, anti-Republican organization whose goal was to frighten blacks from voting.

Adherents were attracted to this vigilante organization that espoused and practised violent tactics. The "organization" was anarchistic and local dens were uncontrollable, to the extent that in 1869 the Imperial Wizard, General Forest, formally disbanded the Klu Klux Klan in Tennessee, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Arkansas. By this time, the estimated death toll of blacks who had died at the hand of the Klan was close to one thousand.

In 1871 martial law brought an "end" to the Klan. Six years later the "occupying army" of Northern Republican troops left Dixie. Southern whites began to relax as they realized that the recently emancipated slaves, who had been economically dependent and educationally deprived for centuries, were not the threat they had feared. The whites' fears and anxieties diminished, as did the Klan --- which continued to exist primarily in legend.

In 1915 the Klan re-surfaced under the leadership of Colonel William J. Simmons. As before, it was a white supremacist fraternal organization. This time, its following was the "God-fearing white middle class". World War I had whipped up patriotic pride in "100 % Americanism". However, with the end of the war, European immigrants --- Catholics and Jews --- "poured" into the United States. In addition, the 1917 Revolution in Russia raised the spectre of the "Bolshevik menace" and heightened fears of class warfare.

The Klan promised to protect the United States from "aliens, slackers, strike leaders and immoral leaders". These were turbulent and troubled times for a still largely agrarian America. The conservative values of the Klan attracted approximately three million members. In rural areas the lodge nature of the Klan was important for community social life. In small towns, next to the Church, the Klan was a centre of ritual, parades, parties and picnics.

The early twenties was the pinnacle of Klan popularity and power, as they "controlled" several governors, senators, congressmen, as well as the police, fire departments, city councils and boards of education in many cities. In 1925, for example, one out of seven adults in Denver, Colorado was a member of the Klan. This was the era of Prohibition and strict Puritanism was being preached from the pulpits of America. Methodist and Baptist ministers provided the Klan with moral leadership. During this period much of Klan vilence was directed against whites, wife beaters, alcoholics and adulterers, as well as blacks.

However, with the swelling of the ranks and the coffers, Klan violence increased. Klan leaders were increasingly being exposed as dictatorial, explosive, irrational and money hungry. A Congressional inquiry was initiated, subjecting the Klan to investigation. In 1924, an Anti-Klan group won control of the state government of Louisiana. They passed legislation requiring the annual filling of membership lists, prohibiting the wearing of masks in public and making Klan activities felonies. The Anti-Klan mayor of Boston did not allow the Klan to set up an office. Wherever the Klan attempted to rent space, the landlord would be deluged by fire, police and building inspectors, such that no landlord was prepared to have the Klan as a tenant. In 1925, the Supreme Court of the United States held that the Klan was not a benevolent association, but a sales organization that would require government permission to do business and would be subject to the myriad of laws and regulations that regulate any business. In 1928 the United States Supreme Court decided that the Klan had no constitutional right to secrecy and that, accordingly, their membership lists were open to government disclosure. This naturally resulted in a loss of members.

With the depression, the Klan shrank radically in size and became once more primarily a social organization. It was still a white supremacist society, but it had also added as evils: unions, strikes, immigrants, Communism, Roman Catholics and Jews. Its decidedly anti-labour views meant that people such as the miners in Kentucky and West Virginia, who might have been attracted to the Klan's white Protestant tenets, but who were also militant supporters of the United Mine Workers of America, would not join the Klan.

In 1940 the Klan made an alliance with the German-American bund. This was an important turing point and decidedly exposed the Klan as not only a racist, but a fascist organization. In 1944 the Bureau of Internal Revenue sued the Klan for $685,000 in back taxes. In 1946, after the end of World War II, the Klan was added to the Federal Bureau of Investigation's list of subversive organizations. The Klan became increasingly parochial and failed to gain respectability. With F.B.I. surveillance and with no leader strong enough to unite the dens, the Klan was increasingly being marginalized.

With the 1954 Supreme Court decision that struck down public school segregation and the beginning of the civil rights movement, the Klan again reared its fascist face. But because of the quasi-criminal nature that surrounded its activities and members, it was not seen as a viable alternative for Americans who might have been attracted to anti-Semitic, anti-Communist, anti-labour and pro-white supremacist views. Middle-class racists were attracted to the less violent White Citizens Councils, whilst the Klan's more virulent members were being jailed by the F.B.I. on charges of conspiracy. Accordingly, the Klan has never --- to date --- achieved the popular support or political power it enjoyed in the 1920's.

REASONS WHY THE KLAN HAS DECLINED

As long as the Klan was viewed as a violent --- almost terrorist --- organization, it has never developed into a mass movement. The infiltration by the F.B.I. and the continual legal and government crackdowns scared off followers. Supreme Court decisions that held that the Klan had no constitutional right to keep its member lists private turned away recruits who wanted to practise their racism in secret under the cloak of night. The Klan's credibility was further undermined by laws preventing members from wearing masks in public; congressional investigations into Klan activities and finances; Klan anarchy; lack of strong central leadership and corruption.

TACTICS ON DEALING WITH THE KLAN

An examination of Klan history shows several things :

(1) that simply declaring an organization illegal does not end the organization (eg. the Mafia); and

(2) that a small minority of Americans hold Klan views and have held these views since 1865 and that despite Government surveillance and "harassment" there are Americans who support racist and fascist ideology.

Accordingly, simply solutions like outlawing the Klan or outlawing racism or fascism do not actually stamp out either the organization or the ideology. The roots of the Klan are too pervasive in North America. Many of the values upon which our society is based in fact support Klan ideology. Thus, only long term and far-reaching solutions can deal *successfully* with racism and fascism. Other methods are destined to fail and the Klan will simply re-surface in a different form.

Effective long term solutions such as equal opportunities in employment, housing and services; anti-racist educational campaigns in the schools and media require constant pressure from a concerned citizenry. Tactically, the Klan tries to win control of city councils, police and fire departments, and school boards. Candidates should be exposed publicly and anti-Klan candidates should be supported and urged to seek public office. To restrict Klan activities and to discourage membership growth forcing the government to make the Klan illegal, forcing the government to infiltrate and place the Klan under surrveillance and forcing the government to use every illegal mechanism to harass the Klan.

Unfortunately, there is no one solution, nor are there any simple solutions to racism. Changing centuries of attitudes and practice cannot happen overnight. It requires broad societal concern --- a solid commitment from the "hearts and minds" of everyone.

MARYKA OMATSU, M.A., LL.B., *is a Toronto lawyer who also works for the Canadian Human Rights Commission.*

Community News

POLICE RAIDS TRIGGER OUTRAGE

February 5, 1981. The largest mass arrest since the 1970 invocation of the War Measures Act took place in Toronto, when about 300 uniformed and plainclothes police officers were involved in a co-ordinated series of raids against four gay baths. Equipped with sledgehammers and crowbars they caused an estimated total of $50,000 property damage, as well as charging twenty men with "keeping a common bawdy house" and another 286 men as "found-ins." It was reported that, during the raids, some of the arrested were beaten and called names; one policeman was heard to taunt that "Too bad these showers weren't hooked up to gas."

This massive attack on the gay community is seen by many ethnic and civil rights leaders as a common threat. For those who remember the killings of Albert Johnson and Buddy Evans, and the intolerant views published in the Metro Toronto Police Association's "News and Views" against blacks, Jews and homosexuals, the raids renewed the fear of abuse of power by the "bad elements" of the police force. More important, they raise serious concerns about the motives of those who have real control of police operations, such as Attorney General Roy McMurtry, Police Commission Chairman Phil Givens, and Police Chief Jack Ackroyd. Were the raids an electoral ploy designed by the Tory government to effect a right wing shift in the vote? Were the "bawdy house" charges thrown in to discredit gay people, just before the appeal of the Body Politic acquitted and the hearings on amending the Ontario Human Rights Code were able to begin? Most important of all, were gay people used for another case of political scapegoating, an excuse to justify the hefty budget the Police Commission was seeking, and its obsession with the control of the moral behaviour of individuals?

For the year 1981, the police had requested an operating allownce of $7.5 million for the intelligence and morality bureaus, but only $1 million for homicide investigation. As citizens, we cannot help but question the propriety of the raids when such a large amount of resources was used to crack down on consensual, victimless activities between adults, while real crimes and violence against women were being committed in the streets. As Asians, we should recognize the analogy between the raids and the concentration camps for Japanese Canadians during World War II, when the fate of thousands was placed in the hands of those who would like to see us as social aliens. We should, therefore, join forces with the many individuals and organisations who have called for an independent inquiry into the raids; it would provide an opportunity not only for investigating police misconduct, but also to examine and possibly redefine the priorities of the police force and its relations to minority groups. As Eilert Ericks, a United Church chaplain at the University of Toronto, told the Metro Toronto Board of Police Commissioners regarding the raids: "I grew up in Nazi Germany. And as the Jews said after that, I say to you now: "Never again.""

The raids have triggered two mass protests, with turnouts of 3,000 and 5,000 respectively, and a series of well-organized rallies. Toronto City Council, the Civil Liberties Association of Canada, and the Coalition for Gay Rights in Ontario are among the many who have called for an independent inquiry. A defense fund for the arrested has also been established. Contributions should be made payable to *Harriet Sachs in trust for RTPC* and

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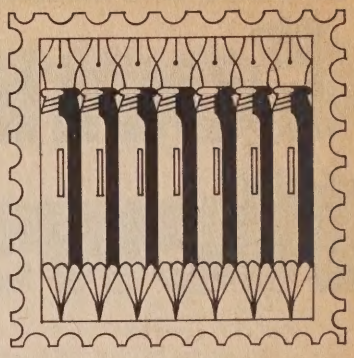
Letters



Dear Sirs,

If anything, the letter of E. Ordonez and E. Sayo actually only confirms my original accusations that they are uninterested in serious unity within the North American Filipino anti-martial law movement because of their political partisan and sectarian approach. What is worse, the creation of two separate National Democratic groups with the same program and all the duplication of effort inihibits unity locally because everybody there knows that the organizational differences are really a hairline technicality as the two separate groups are really two factions.of the same National Democratic organization.

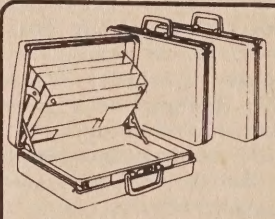
While my earlier letter dealt with the Anti-Martial Law Coalition, Ordonez and Sayo dwell on the National Democratic Front in the Philippines. They do this because they want to avoid complicity with Marcos in 1965 by claiming that the NDF was only created in 1973; however we are told that the National Democrats foretold of martial law before 1972. To refresh the memories of Ordonez and Sayo, the National Democrats in 1965 belonged to Kabataan Makabayan. In 1970, KM formed the Movement for a Democratic Philippines which in turn formed the NDF in 1973. The essential aspect of the National Democratic program --- the multi-class front with the national business class --- is the same for both KM in 1965 and NDF in 1973. As to foretelling martial law, the important ingredient of a program is its ability to prevent or overcome adversity.

Ordonez and Sayo deny that the present regime is the class rule of the Filipino national business class because there is a small business class opposition to Marcos. But since when does the exception become the rule? While searching for an alliance with a segment of the business class, Ordonez and Sayo ignore that fact that this minority is dead set against the very thought of an alliance with the National Democrats. If this business minority is uninterested in a multi-class alliance or coalition, just where are the "conscious petty bourgeoisie and ... national bourgeoisie" heralded by Ordonez and Sayo ?

While downgrading socialism immediate or othterwise, Ordonez and Sayo imply that the socialist stage will come after the National Democratic one. Perhaps they should explain to the readers why a substantial segment of the national business class would be more than willing to enter a coalition with National Democrats led by the NDF, the new CPP, and the NPA no less only to be socialized out of existence when National Democrats like Ordonez and Sayo decree that socialism has become "Immediate" ? Surely they must be dreaming in technicolor.

Finally I am accused of red-baiting them. Personlly I don't know why anyone would think of baiting them when they do a much better job on themselves than anyone could think of doing. That is why the Philippine embassy has a field day in the Filipino community. But in the end, it is the poverty stricken Filipino workers and peasants who the pay the price.

Yours truly,
John R. Glenn



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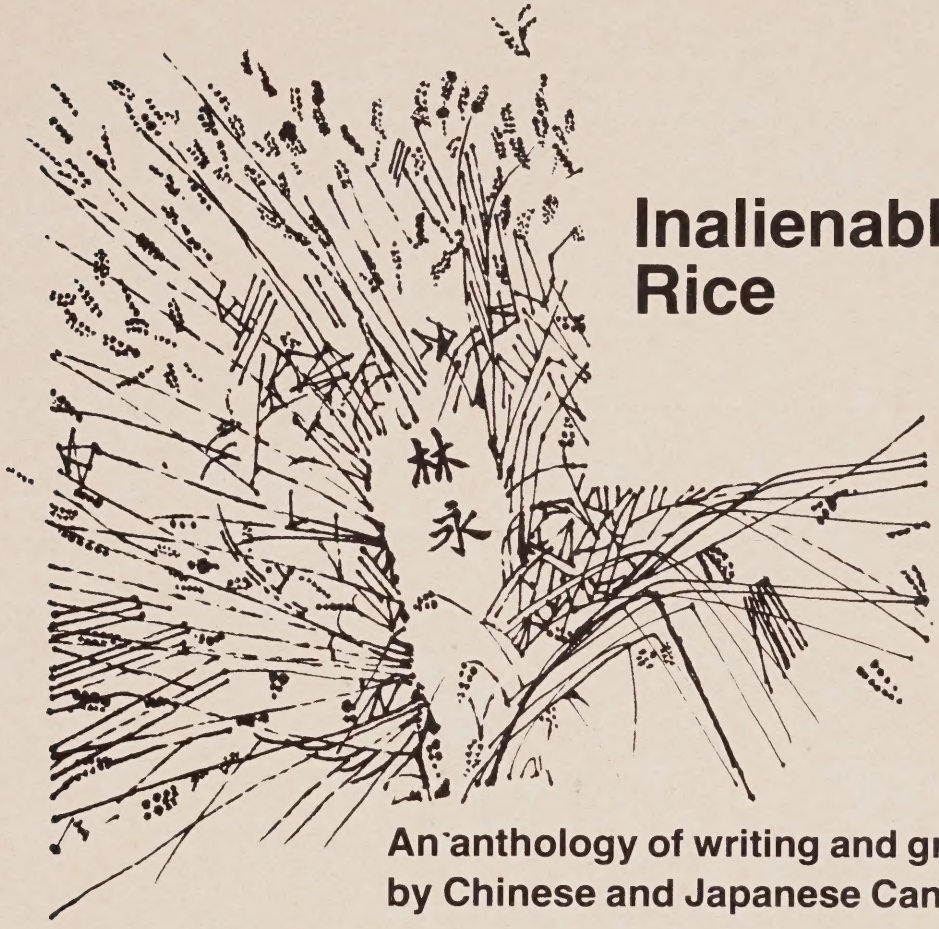

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